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SUBJECT: U.S. FOREST SERVICE EXPLORES EXPANDED COLLABORATION WITH BRAZILIAN COUNTERPARTS

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: A team of experts from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) identified and prioritized a range of areas for two-way cooperation with Brazilian counterparts during their April 14-17 visit to Brazil. Officials from the young Brazilian Forest Service, the Brazilian Agricultural Research Agency (EMBRAPA), the Ministry of Environment (MMA) and the new Chico Mendes Institute (ICMBio), which manages Brazil's vast federal protected areas, sought increased cooperation in the areas of sustainable forest management, timber sale contracting, information systems and forest planning, national forest inventory, climate change, fire management, forest products, bio-energy, managing concessions, and sustainable tourism.
END SUMMARY.

FOREST MANAGEMENT COOPERATION

¶2. (SBU) A team from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) organized by Michelle Zweede from the USFS's International Programs Office met with Brazilian counterparts to discuss future bilateral cooperation.

The team included Carlos Rodriguez-Franco, Ronald McRoberts, Hans-Erik Andersen, Ernesto Alvarado, Dennis Dykstra, and Michael Ritter, who are experts in the field of forest research management, climate change, fire management, remote sensing, forest inventorying, and forest products. At a three-day seminar (April 14-16) in Brasilia, the Brazilian Forest Service and EMBRAPA emphasized their interest in expanding collaboration in the following areas: forest management and monitoring; best management practices for rural roads; timber sale contract development and monitoring; information systems and forest planning; national forest inventory; forest products and bio-energy; climate change and fire management. The USFS team and the Brazilians called on a Brazilian EMBRAPA scientist temporarily working with the USFS at its Pacific Northwest Research Station to further develop these ideas in coordination with Brazilian counterparts.

¶3. (SBU) The USFS team outlined its work program for Brazil, which includes sharing lessons learned technologies, providing training, building technical and scientific capacity, technology transfer, and expanding joint research efforts. The USFS's activities are supported by the USAID Mission in Brazil.

STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION ON PROTECTED AREAS

¶4. (SBU) On April 17, the USFS team met with representatives from the ICMBio, MMA, and the NGO Conservation Strategy Fund (CSF), as well as with Post personnel to discuss next steps and long term planning for collaborating on protected area and concession management. ICMBio is preparing to develop concession plans for many of Brazil's national parks in order to increase visitation and public visibility. It also is seeking technical assistance in the area of sustainable tourism. USFS with support from Post and USAID is developing a collaborative program with ICMBio and the MMA to provide technical assistance and training as ICMBio develops the

national protected area concession program and plans for sustainable tourism. The USFS team thought that the USFS expertise, as well as calling on experts from other USG land management agencies, could provide valuable technical assistance.

¶5. (SBU) In May, the USFS will host a team of ICMbio officials in a trip to the USFS sites to learn more about the U.S. concession system within public lands and public/private partnerships. USFS will also develop a series of visits from USFS experts over the next couple of years to strengthen the relationship with the ICMbio and assist building capacity within the agency.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT. The USFS offers invaluable technical assistance to Brazilian counterparts, which should help Brazil better manage its vast public lands. This advances the USG's interests in addressing global climate change because the up till now lack of oversight and weak management and effective environmental has allowed millions of hectares of forests to be cleared to change the land use to ranching and agriculture use. This massive, ongoing deforestation has propelled Brazil into the ranks of the world's leading greenhouse gas emitters. Fortunately, the USFS is building on excellent and long-standing ties with Brazilian counterparts regarding sustainable forest management, conservation, and fire management. END COMMENT.

SOBEL